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Can Faith be Justified?

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In this paper, I argue for a new conception of religious justifications which takes the performance of miracles as the paradigm of reasoning in religion. The paper has two parts: In the first part, I argue against Swinburne's parity argument for the existence of God by showing that religious perceptions fit more comfortably among aspect perceptions, e.g., the perceptions of beauty and courage, than among our perceptions of objects and colors. While one can be said to believe that a certain object is red solely on the basis of someone else's testimony, one cannot be said to believe that a certain object is beautiful solely on the basis of someone else's testimony. In order to believe that a certain object is beautiful, one has to see its beauty for oneself. Similarly, as a matter of logic, one cannot be said to believe that God exists solely on the basis of someone else's testimony. Believing in God necessarily involves seeing God for oneself. In the second part of the paper I employ the analogy between seeing God and seeing beauty and the moral features of an act to propose a performative and transformative conception of religious reasoning. I argue that an argument in religion is a performance which brings various facts or events into life in a particular manner, so that God may be seen in or through them. Any such performance through which God is seen may be properly called a "miracle". Thus, the performance of miracles, i.e., of acts that are directed at becoming the vehicles through which God is seen, can be taken as the paradigm of religious reasoning.

A popular line of defense of the rationality of theism employs a proposed analogy between religious experiences and sense perceptions, arguing that we have no more right to affirm the epistemic status of perceptual beliefs, beliefs based on sense perception, than we have of religious beliefs that are based on religious experiences. Yandell, for example states: "If there is experiential evidence for any existential proposition, perceptual experiences provide evidence that there are physical objects; it is arbitrary not to add that perceptual experience provides evidence that God exists. . .".[1] Other philosophers express similar views: Alston affirms a Christian Mystical doxastic practice as standing on an equal footing with a Sense Perceptual doxastic practice; and Swinburne formulates a Principle of Credulity, which is presumed to apply to both religious experiences and sense perceptions, affirming the epistemic status of both.

The purpose of this paper is to point to some of the inadequacies of such attempted justifications by highlighting some of the differences between religious experiences and sense perceptions, and to use those differences to

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construe a new conception of the justification of religious beliefs, which takes the performance of miracles as the paradigm of reasoning in religion.

This paper has two parts: In the first part, I argue against an influential argument from religious experience, namely Swinburne's analogical argument as he develops it in *The Existence of God*. In the second part, I propose a new conception of justification that starts with the disanalogy between religious perceptions and sense perceptions, and that draws on the analogy between religious beliefs and ethical and aesthetic judgments to argue that the paradigm of reasoning in religion is the performance of miracles.

I. Swinburne's Principle of Credulity

In *The Existence of God*, Swinburne formulates a Principle of Credulity that is presumed to apply to both religious experiences and sense perceptions:

> It is a principle of rationality that (in the absence of special considerations) if it seems (epistemically) to a subject that x is present, then probably x is present; what one seems to perceive is probably so. How things seem to be is good grounds for a belief about how things are. From this it would follow that, in the absence of special considerations, all religious experiences ought to be taken by their subjects as genuine, and hence as substantial grounds for belief in the existence of their apparent object—God, or Mary, or Ultimate Reality, or Poseidon. This principle, which I shall call the Principle of Credulity, and the conclusion drawn from it seems to me correct.[2]

Swinburne explicates the above definition in two different ways: (1) He explicates it in terms of a principle that is "concerned with the subject's grounds for believing that things are as they seem to *him*."[3] He argues: "One who has had a religious experience apparently of God has, by the Principle of Credulity, good reason for believing that there is a God—other things being equal—especially if it is a forceful experience."[4]

As a principle that is concerned with the subject's epistemic right to trust her own perceptions, it can, at best, vindicate the mystic's epistemic right to trust her own perceptions of God; nevertheless, it says nothing concerning the epistemic duties or rights of those who have no religious experiences. If one seeks to provide a justification of religious beliefs that is directed beyond those who are already convinced, she has to go beyond a vindication of the epistemic status of the perceiver's own perceptions.

(2) Thus, we find a second explication of the Principle of Credulity in *The Existence of God* which is stated in relation to the manner in which things appear to others: "thing are (probably) as *others* claim to have perceived them."[5] This claim consists of two components: (a) The claim that "(in the absence of special considerations) the experiences of others are (probably) as they report them,"[6] which is Swinburne's Principle of Testimony, and (b) The claim that in the absence of special considerations, "how things seem to be is good grounds for a belief about how things are."[7]

For Swinburne, religious experiences play a central epistemic role both for those who have had them as well as for those who have not.

Swinburne states:

> If S reports that it seems (epistemically) to S that x is present, then that is reason for others also to believe that x is present, although not as good reason as it is for S...[8]

Thus:

> One who has not himself had an experience apparently of God is not in as strong a position as those who have. He will have less evidence for the existence of God; but not very much less, for he will have testimony of many who have had such experiences.[9]

I have no quarrel with Swinburne's first explication of the Principle of Credulity, in terms of the subject's epistemic right to trust her own perceptions.[10] However, I find Swinburne's second explication of the Principle of Credulity, in terms of the reliability of perceptual testimonies, *as applied to religious experiences*, highly problematic.

The reliability of our perception is ordinarily taken for granted in our life with physical objects. We sit on what seems to be a chair, write on what seems to be a piece of paper, and hand out bills to what seems to be a shopkeeper. When asked questions about our environment, we describe it as we perceive it, and appeal to our perceptions as grounds for our judgments. Testimonies, too, play a great role in our doxastic life. Had we not taken testimony as a reliable method of belief formation, our doxastic universe would have been significantly impoverished. Under normal conditions, when a person responds to the question, "How do you know that Bill's eyes are blue?" by saying "I saw them", not only do we believe that she has a right to claim knowledge of the color of Bill's eyes, but we also form the same belief on the basis of her testimony that Bill's eyes are blue. The question, however, is whether such principles have the general form that Swinburne takes them to have, or whether their extension is more limited. I shall argue that while the reliability of perception can be taken as a general principle of rationality, the reliability of perceptual testimony cannot be taken as such a general principle since it does not extend to perceptions of aspects, e.g., to perceptions of beauty, sadness, courage, or God. I shall argue that perceptual testimony is not a reliable method of belief formation since in various circumstances it is not a method of belief formation at all.

Swinburne is operating with an analogy between perceptions of physical objects and perceptions of God. In the absence of special considerations, a perceptual testimony to have seen a table in a particular place serves as a reason for the non-perceiver to believe that a table was present in a particular place; similarly, in the absence of special considerations, the mystic's testimony to have perceived God is presumed to serve as a reason for the atheist to believe that God exists.[11]

Do we know of anyone who was converted to faith by means of her hearing of another person's religious experience? The absence of such occurrences, in itself, provides us with a good reason to suspect that there are important conceptual differences between seeing a table, seeing a shape,

or a color, and seeing-God, and hence between believing that there is a table of a particular color and shape in a particular location and believing that God exists. If there are indeed such differences then we may surely expect significant differences between the manner in which religious beliefs can be justified and the manner in which ordinary perceptual beliefs can.

Thus, I shall argue that while one can be justified in trusting one's own perception of God, as well as one's own perception of the beauty of an object, or the courage or rightness of a certain act, one cannot be justified in trusting another person's testimony of her perception of courage, beauty, or God. One cannot, as a matter of logic, form certain beliefs merely by means of a testimony. Believing that x is beautiful, that y is the right thing to do, or that God exists involve seeing for oneself.

Seeing and Seeing-as

Realizing that our concept of perception is a "family resemblance" concept that encapsulates a variety of phenomena with diverse conceptual features, the later Wittgenstein distinguished two uses of "see":

> Two cases of the word 'see'. The one: 'What do you see there?'—'I see *this*' (and then a description, a drawing, a copy). The other: 'I see a likeness between these two faces'—let the man I tell this to be seeing the faces as clearly as I do myself. (PI, p. 193).[12]

In various remarks, Wittgenstein emphasized "the difference of category between the two 'objects' of sight" (PI, p. 193), characterizing phenomena belonging to the second group as half experience, half thought[13], an amalgam of the two[14], between perceiving and thinking[15]. Among such phenomena are seeing a picture as a picture of a duck, a rabbit or a duck-rabbit, perceiving one's intention, hearing sadness, seeing courage, seeing beauty, and many others. Wittgenstein called such perceptual phenomena "seeing-as" phenomena or "aspect perceptions".

I cannot undertake the important task of providing a detailed typology of various perceptual phenomena and their diverse conceptual features here.[16] I shall make a few brief comments that are intended to gesture at the great diversity of conceptual features that characterize different phenomena that fall under the concept of "perception". Awareness of the diversity, or at least of its possibility should lead us to exercise caution when dealing with the epistemic status of perceptual testimonies.

There is a great deal of disagreement among commentators as to the precise scope of seeing-as phenomena in Wittgenstein's writings. Some, such as Mulhall, take a broad reading of Wittgenstein's comments, where seeing aspects extends beyond our relation to ambiguous pictures, to our relation to pictures in general, as well as to words and to people.[17] Others take a more restrictive reading of Wittgenstein's views.[18] What was important for Wittgenstein and what is important for us is not how we apply one title or another, but rather, that we are aware of the variety of conceptual features that characterise the variety of phenomena that we call "seeing" or "perceiving". However we choose to name the different groups of phenomena and where exactly we choose to draw the boundaries among them

is largely inconsequential.

One important feature that distinguishes different perceptual phenomena from one another is the role of a conceptual scheme, of language and a particular type of training and education in some perceptions but not in others. On that score, we can distinguish the perception of objects and colors from the perception of beauty, courage and God. While the perception of objects and colors does not presuppose the mastery of a language and is, therefore, naturally applied to animals, the perceptions of courage, beauty and God presuppose the mastery of a language, and are therefore restricted to people who master the relevant conceptual scheme. While we describe dogs as seeing other dogs, cats, and birds, we do not ordinarily describe them as hearing the beauty of a sonata, nor do we describe them as perceiving the courage in an act. The role of a conceptual scheme, of culture, and of a particular type of education within such perceptions reveals the manners in which such phenomena incorporate a different although related conception of "experience".

Perceiving God, whether through a mystical union, or in the more ordinary experience of seeing God in the beauty of the universe is an experience which presupposes a complex conceptual scheme, a particular type of training and education. As such, it is not applied to animals nor is it applied to little children before they speak. Neither dogs nor babies are ordinarily reported as having mystical experiences.

In respect to the role of language, training, and education in our ability to see God, religious perceptions fit better among perceptions of beauty and courage than among perceptions of objects and colors. In various other respects too, religious perceptions fit better among the former than among the latter.

The perception of objects and colors is not subject to the will. The perception of various aspects, e.g., beauty and courage, on the other hand, is subject to the will. Wittgenstein states:

> An aspect is subject to the will. If something appears blue to me, I cannot see it red, and it makes no sense to say 'See it red'; whereas it does make sense to say 'See it as...'. And that the aspect is voluntary (at least to a certain extent) seems to be essential to it, as it is essential to imagining that *it* is voluntary" (RPP I, 899).

An aspect's subjection to the will does not entail that the command "See it as..." can always be successfully obeyed. What it does entail, however, is that the command is always a meaningful one.

Like the perceptions of beauty and courage, a central category of religious perceptions is also subject to the will. While we cannot meaningfully ask one to try to see the tree as blue rather than green, we can meaningfully ask "Try to see his laughter as courageous rather than as cowardly", "Try to see her wrinkles as beautiful rather than as ugly" and "Try to see the heavens as telling the glory of God," "Try to see it as God's will."

Unlike the agreement that characterizes our perceptions of objects and of colors, our perception of courage, beauty, and God is characterized by a great deal of disagreement. Disputes over the color of an object or over the

question whether it is a cat or a dog do not endure. Disputes in ethics, aesthetics and religion, on the other hand, endure. Where one person sees beauty, another sees kitsch; where one sees courage, another sees carelessness; where one sees God, another sees a metaphysical crutch, a superstition, a happenstance.

Noticing the conceptual diversity within our concept of perception should lead us to exercise caution when dealing with the epistemic status of perceptual testimonies. We cannot throw all perceptual testimonies to one basket and *assume* that they all exhibit similar epistemic features. There is no reason to *assume* that one's testimony to have seen an ordinary object of perception would carry equal or similar epistemic weight as her testimony to have seen an aspect. There is no reason to *assume* that one's testimony to have seen a black man would carry similar epistemic weight as her testimony to have seen a beautiful man; nor is there reason to *assume* that one's testimony to have seen a chair would carry similar epistemic weight as her testimony to have seen God. Indeed conceptual differences between perceptions of objects and colors, and aspect perceptions extend to epistemology.

Let us look more closely at perceptions of beauty and at ethical perceptions before we turn to perceptions of God.

Perceptions of beauty

The person who believes that a certain movie, painting, or novel is beautiful on the basis of her perception of their beauty can be said to have a good reason for her belief. However, a person who is not familiar with the item concerned has little reason to trust such a testimony and believe that the item concerned is beautiful.

Our suspicion towards other people's testimonies of their perceptions of beauty is manifested in a variety of manners: we often disregard a critic's review, even a favorite critic's review and proceed to see the movie or buy the book; we do not allow our mothers to buy our clothes for us; we replace presents; if a generous friend offers to redecorate our house for us, we refuse; we do not trust a friend to pick out the most beautiful painting for us but we trust her to pick out a painting by its catalogue number.

While it is unlikely that what another person had seen as a dog, I would have seen as an elephant, it is quite likely that what another person had found beautiful, I would have found kitsch, dull, boring, or unengaging. People's perceptions of beauty vary greatly; and this great variety underlies our inability to trust another person's perception of beauty.

However, the issue is not merely of trust or mistrust of the reliability of another person's perception of beauty. It involves the logical features of the belief that a certain object is beautiful. The point is a grammatical one: one cannot be *said* to believe that an item is beautiful merely on the basis of another person's testimony. Believing that something is beautiful involves seeing its beauty for oneself.

Thus, a reviewer who writes a review on the basis of other critics reviews, or on the basis of her friends' impressions cannot be taken seriously. We would criticize her as neglectful. Our intuition is that she cannot evaluate the aesthetic features, the beauty, or excellence of a picture without actually seeing it. Knowing that she has not seen the movie, we find

ourselves unable to take her statement that "The Green Mile is a beautiful movie" as an expression of a belief.

Insisting that one cannot believe that a certain object is beautiful on the basis of another person's perception of the beauty of that object does not amount to a denial of the relevance of other people's ways of seeing for one's own beliefs and judgments. A friend's testimony may motivate me to buy a book, see a movie, or look again at a painting. It may even help me see beauty where I have previously failed to see it. However, the same testimony that motivates me to buy the book or see the movie does not induce me to respond to the question "Is it a good movie?", or "Is it a good book?" with a simple "Yes". Rather, I would say, "I heard it was good", "x liked it", "It's supposed to be good". Another person's testimony provides me with a reason to attend to the object, to look, or look again. It provides me with a reason to believe that I may find it beautiful. However, as a matter of logic, it does not provide me with a reason to believe that it is beautiful. Believing that a certain object is beautiful involves seeing its beauty for oneself.

Ethical perceptions

Ethical judgments, too, involve seeing for oneself. In ethical matters, too, another person's belief, judgment, or advice, *on their own*, do not suffice as grounds or reasons for a belief or a judgment. We cannot dispense with the first person's perspective.

Ethical deliberation can often be described in Swinburne's vocabulary of "seeming" as well as in perceptual terms. Let us take a classical example from Sartre. Sartre describes a young man facing a dilemma: should he join the French Resistance or should he look after his sick mother? Torn between two conflicting duties he finds it hard to make up his mind. One moment, he sees his mother at the center of the picture, and he perceives his duty to her as outweighing his duty to his country; the next, he sees his duty to his country at the center of the picture and as outweighing his duty to his mother. Pulled by two incompatible perceptions of the situation, which suggest two incompatible courses of action, the young man has to make a decision.

There is an obvious sense in which the problem is the young man's problem—he has to act. However, Gaita and Rhees emphasize that there is a sense in which the very nature of the dilemma involves *his* way of perceiving his options.[19] In this sense, as a matter of logic, no one could solve the young man's problem; no one could make a decision for him. The young man's problem is his problem and the solution, too, has to come from him.

Rhees states:

> What I would regard as a reason might not be a reason for you—might not function as a reason in your decisions. This is not trivial and you cannot brush it off by murmuring 'relativism'. It is bound up with the whole point that the decision has to come from the person involved. Even the *problem* is hardly ever the same from one person to another. And what makes it the problem it is for me are the reasons which weigh with me in one direction and in another. If in the

> face of these reasons I conclude that I ought to give up my job another man considering the same reasons might conclude differently. Perhaps I shall think that what he has decided is wrong. But I might *not* think this. It was his decision and—in an important sense—it was his problem.[20]

Gaita emphasizes that moral deliberation is not simply deliberation with a moral subject matter. The differences between moral problems and other practical problems "are not external features of moral problems".[21] Thus:

> The fact that there can be no manual of morals, no theory of its practice which plays the same role as does mountaineering theory to mountaineering practice, no quiz show and no whiz kids of moral dilemmas, no Nobel Laureates in Morality, is intrinsic to our understanding of what it is to have a moral problem and what it is to think about it. We express it by saying that moral problems are personal.[22]

This does not mean that another person's way of seeing is irrelevant for my moral deliberation nor does it exclude the possibility of moral advice. A friend's advice is an invitation to see things a certain way. She may challenge my way of seeing and through that, my belief concerning the right course of action to pursue. She may help me see the complexity in the situation. She may help me see the relevance of various issues that I had failed to consider. She may help me consider consequences and implications that I had failed to take into account. She may also help me come to a conclusion.

However, unlike a testimony to have perceived a red chair in the next room, which can be taken at face value as a reason to believe that there is a red chair in the next room, a friend's moral advice cannot be taken at face value and followed without further ado. Following a friend's moral advice without immersing myself in her way of seeing, without seriously considering it is itself a moral failure. A person's "doing the right thing" as a result of her following advice but without seeing its point, is missing something important about the situation's moral features. She might be doing the right thing but it is not obvious that she is doing the right thing for the right reason, nor is it obvious that she is doing the right thing in the right spirit. This may be manifested in the subtleties of her behavior, and may be apparent to sensitive eyes. "Doing the right thing" is not merely a matter of performing the right act. It involves my intention, the consequences of my act; it involves the manner in which I have reached my decision; it has to do with whether I have sought advice or not, with how I took the advice, whether I have seriously considered it, dismissed it without thinking, followed it without consideration, or immersed myself in it in order to try to see its point.

Thus, while "ethical testimony" plays a role in our moral lives in the form of moral advice, it plays a different role than the role of perceptual testimonies of colors, shapes, or the presence of objects and their arrangement. While a testimony concerning the color of a certain object may be

taken at face value, trusted and believed, advice concerning the right course of action has to be taken in and made one's own, before one can be *said* to believe that the recommended course of action is the right one, before one can be said to have done the right thing.

I have discussed two perceptual testimonies: perceptual testimonies of beauty and of the "right thing to do" in order to point out that some perceptual testimonies, as a matter of logic, do not function as grounds, justifications, or reasons for the non-perceiver to hold the corresponding perceptual beliefs. While the perceiver's perceptual belief is *prima facie* justified, the non-perceiver cannot be justified merely by means of the perceiver's testimony of her perception. These examples suffice to show that Swinburne's Principle of Credulity, in its second explication, cannot be applied across the board to ordinary perceptions and aspect perceptions alike. I shall now say a few words about religious perceptions.

Religious perceptions

Seeing God, like the seeing of beauty, or of the "right thing to do" is conceptually distinguishable from seeing an ordinary object of perception. An interesting biblical passage describes a situation in which Eli and Samuel are within a hearing distance from one another, but only Samuel hears God speaking to him, while Eli does not:

> Eli . . . was lying down in his own place; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down within the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was. Then the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!" and he said "Here I am!" and ran to Eli, and said "Here I am for you called me". But he said "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down. And the Lord called again, "Samuel!" and Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "Here I am for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again." Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. And the Lord called Samuel again the third time. And he arose and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli understood[23] that the Lord was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for thy servant hears.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place (1 Samuel 3:2-9).

This passage gives expression to the difference between hearing God and hearing the voice of another human being. While a human being's voice can be heard by anyone with normal hearing who is in sufficient proximity to the speaker, one hears God only if one is addressed. Wittgenstein emphasizes the same point in *Zettel*, saying: "'You can't hear God speak to someone else, you can hear him only if you are being addressed'.—That is a grammatical remark" (Z, 717).

Wittgenstein's grammatical comment is, I believe, an affirmation of the non-transferability of testimonies of religious perceptions as grounds for belief in God's existence. Samuel's testimony to have heard God is neither a justification nor a reason for the atheist to believe that God exists, nor is it

a reason for the atheist to believe that God spoke to Samuel. Eli's realization that it was God who was talking to Samuel does not obscure this point. After all, Eli, too, was a man of God. Eli was a prophet. Could we imagine a Freud realizing that it was God who was speaking to Samuel?

God's command to Ezekiel to eat His Word can be seen as an attempt to bridge the conceptual gap between hearing God's Word and hearing the words of a human being:

> But you, son of man, hear what I say to you; be not rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you . . . Son of man, eat what is offered to you; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel . . . Son of man, go, get you to the house of Israel, and speak with *my* words to them (Ezekiel 2:8; 3:1,4).[24]

Ezekiel's eating the Word of God is a way of narrowing the gap between Ezekiel's experience of God, and Israel's intended experience of God by means of their experience of Ezekiel.

The non-transferability of religious testimony has to do with divergence and disagreement. While I have every reason to believe that had I been standing where Samuel was standing, when he was talking to Eli, that I, too, would have heard the voice of Eli, I have no reason to believe that had I been standing where Samuel was, when God was talking to him, that I, unlike Eli, would have been able to hear God. I have every reason to believe that had I been in Augustine's room when he heard the voice calling "take, read" that I too would have heard that voice. However, I have no reason to think that like Augustine, I too would have heard that voice as a divine invitation. While I have every reason to believe that I too would have witnessed the thunder and lightning that frightened Luther, I have no reason to think that I, like Luther, would have been filled with a sense of divine forgiveness on that occasion. I have no reason to believe that had I been in the same room with Teresa of Avila or with St. John of the Cross, that I too would have had the same mystical experiences that each of them has had. Such divergence and disagreement underlie the reserve with which we treat people's reports of their experiences of God, whether we are believers or atheists.

It is important to notice that trusting the mystic's experience is not simply a matter of trusting a person's testimony concerning the features of an object that one was not in a position to observe. Rather, it is more like the case where one is asked to trust another person's testimony of her perception of an (aspect of) an object or situation that one did perceive, but perceived differently, under a different aspect. The atheist is asked to mistrust her own perception of the world, and to trust the mystic's way of perceiving the world.

Both the mystic (theist) and the atheist inhabit the same world. They may be participating in the same battle, parenting the same sick child, looking at the same sky, or reading the same book. Unlike the mystic, the atheist does not see the world as revealing of God's design; she does not see the heavens telling the glory of God, nor does she see God in a cloud. She does not hear God speak to her in the verses of the bible. She does not

see floods and earthquakes as God's Will, nor does she see unexpected victories or recoveries as miracles. She sees cancer, madness and death as the marks of the meaninglessness and purposelessness of human existence. What reason does she have to trust the mystic's way of seeing the world when she sees a universe in disarray? What would it be like for her to trust the mystic's testimonies while she continues to see the world as she does? Calling her deprived, condemning her way of seeing the world as sinful or ungrateful, comparing her inability to see God to color blindness or to a lack of musical ear does not amount to a reason.

There are various ways in which we deal with perceptual disagreements: we examine the conditions under which each of the perceivers has had her experiences, and attempt to establish whether they are "normal"; we examine each of the perceivers, and attempt to establish whether they are "normal". We distinguish "normal" and "expert" perceivers from one another. By the employment of such means, we are usually able to reconcile disagreements concerning ordinary objects of perception. Thus, in disagreements concerning the color of an object, we dismiss the perceptions of those who were under the influence of LSD; we dismiss the perceptions of those who are color blind. We reconcile disagreements about shape by dismissing the perceptions of those who are far sighted, as well as of those who were looking at the object when it was dark. In a dispute concerning whether a certain Whiskey has a sherry after-taste, we trust the wine taster's perception.

However, disagreements concerning beauty, the moral value of a certain course of action, or God's existence are not ordinarily reconciled by appeal to "normal conditions", "normal perceivers' or "expert perceivers". We acknowledge some people as art connoisseurs. However, we do not recognize beauty experts, nor do we recognize moral experts. The atheist does not recognize the mystic as an expert perceiver of God. Given the fact that our ordinary means for resolving perceptual disagreements are of little use in ethical, aesthetic and religious disputes, what force does Swinburne's stipulative insistence that the atheist has a reason to trust the mystic's perception of God have? Should the person who does not see the beauty of a particular object also trust the person who testifies to her perception of its beauty?[25] Again, what would it be like for the atheist to trust the mystic's perceptions if she continues to see a disordered universe with no judge and no justice?

However, the epistemic disanalogy between ordinary perceptions and various aspect perceptions goes further than that. As in the ethical and aesthetic examples, here, too, this is not merely a matter of the trust or mistrust that another person's testimony warrants. Rather, it has to do with the very possibility of forming a belief on the basis of someone else's testimony. The issue is a conceptual/logical one. It is part of the very grammar of belief in God that one cannot be *said* to believe in God on the basis of someone else's experience of God. Believing in God necessarily involves seeing God for oneself.

The great deal of divergence, the difficulty in distinguishing competent perceivers from incompetent ones, the non-transferability of perceptual testimonies as grounds for belief formation, and the role of the first per-

son's perspective distinguish the epistemic status and function of perceptions of ethical, aesthetic and religious properties, from the epistemic status and function of perceptions of colors, shapes and objects. A plausible conception of religious justification must take account of such differences. In the next section, I shall develop a conception of religious justifications that takes account of such differences and argue that the performance of miracles can be taken as the paradigm of religious justifications.

II. Reasons and Miracles

While a testimony to have perceived beauty, a certain course of action as morally right, or God cannot be taken at face value as a reason or ground for forming the corresponding belief, a testimony may be the occasion through which one comes to believe that a certain object is beautiful, that a certain course of action is morally desirable, or that God exists. The witness may become the mediator through which the non-perceiver comes to perceive beauty, courage, or God. The witness' personality, tone of voice and gestures, her personal biography and way of life play as important a role as her verbal testimony in her ability to reason the non-perceiver into seeing.

Sibley mentions seven types of reasons that are employed in aesthetics, some of which have to do with the content of one's message (1-5), and others, with the manner in which it is conveyed (6-7). He mentions the following:

1. Mentioning the non-aesthetic features of the work of art. Through that, the critic singles out what may serve as a key to grasping something new.
2. Mentioning the very aesthetic qualities that the critic wishes others to see, e.g., gracefulness, and intensity.
3. Linking the remarks about the aesthetic features to the non-aesthetic features of the work of art.
4. Using similes and metaphors.
5. Using contrasts, comparisons, and reminiscences.
6. Repeating and reiterating the same point that the critic wishes the hearer to notice.
7. Accompanying the talk with appropriate tone of voice, expression, nods, looks and gestures.[26]

Sibley emphasises that reasoning in aesthetics is different from reasoning in science: "We cannot prove by argument or by assembling a sufficiency of conditions that something is graceful; but this is no more puzzling than our inability to prove by using the methods metaphors and gestures of the art critic, that it will be made in ten moves."[27] Aesthetic properties cannot be *deduced* from non-aesthetic ones. We cannot isolate a set of necessary and sufficient conditions under which a certain fact is necessarily perceived as beautiful, elegant, or graceful.

Dancy makes a similar point in regards to ethics. He points out that moral reasoning is not subsumptive in nature, i.e., that it does not involve the subsumption of the particular case under certain general moral princi-

ples. He emphasises that moral reasons are particularist in nature:

> To justify one's choice is to give the reasons one sees for making it, and to give those reasons is just to lay out how one sees the situation . . . In giving those reasons one is not *arguing* for one's way of seeing the situation. One is rather appealing to others to see it (...) the way one sees it oneself, and the appeal consists in laying out that way as persuasively as one can. The persuasiveness here is the persuasiveness of narrative: an internal coherence in the account which compels assent. We succeed in our aim when our story sounds right. Moral justification is therefore not subsumptive in nature but narrative.[28]

The particularist nature of ethical and aesthetic reasoning is not indicative of a certain deficiency in the rationality of these realms of discourse. The types of reasons that are ordinarily employed in ethics and aesthetics are precisely what reasons are like in ethics and aesthetics. In as much as deductive arguments are appropriate within mathematics and the use of a particular tone of voice is not, the latter is appropriate in aesthetics while deductive reasons are not. The type of reasoning that is characteristic of religious reasoning is also particularist in nature. Priests and ministers do not ordinarily use the argument from religious experience, nor do they use the ontological, cosmological, or teleological argument for God's existence when preaching the gospel. They tell a narrative, a parable, point to certain facts, perform certain acts. Arguments in ethics, aesthetics or religion do not consist of "assembling a sufficiency of conditions that something is graceful"[29], morally right, or sublime. Rather, they engage with the particular features of the event or object concerned, so that a new aspect may dawn.

Dancy emphasises that in giving reasons one is appealing to others to see the situation as oneself does. Various aestheticians speak of reasons and arguments in aesthetics in similar terms. According to Sibley, reasons in aesthetics are intended to help one come to a new perception of the object.[30] For Sibley, the critic's talk can help us "to *see* what he has seen, namely, the aesthetic qualities of the object."[31] Isenberg describes the use of reasons in aesthetics as directed at inducing sameness of vision.[32] Reasons, in aesthetics, do not bypass experience but try to transform it. The critic is a teacher who "affords *new* perceptions and with them new values"[33]; and understanding in aesthetics "is nothing but a second moment of aesthetic experience, a retrial of experienced values."[34]

The witness' personality and biography play an important role in ethical and religious reasoning. Gaita emphasises that receiving moral advice is different from reading a proof for a theorem on the blackboard. The person giving the advice, her personal experiences, the seriousness with which she approaches the situation are all relevant to the manner in which I am to respond to her advice. Conversion, too, is not merely a matter of being given a valid argument. People, with bodies, histories, with the ability to feel happiness and pain play a great role in one's way to God. The personality of the preacher, whether she is modest or arrogant, over-zealous or tolerant, whether the expression on her face is kind or impatient, the manner in which she treats her partner, parents and children, how she answers

the telephone solicitor, her tone of voice, and way of gesturing are all relevant in regards to her ability to reason her hearers into seeing God. While Einstein's sexual history is irrelevant for our evaluation of the Theory of Relativity, Jimmy Swaggart's sexual adventures are an impediment in his ability to reason many into accepting Jesus as Lord.

Emotions play an important role in reasoning a person into aspect seeing. Gaita states:

> In matters of value we often learn by being moved, and our being moved is not merely the dramatic occasion of our introduction to a proposition which can be assessed according to critical categories, whose grammar excludes our being moved as extraneous to the 'cognitive' content of the proposition.[35]

Being moved is the very manner by which people are converted into a new ethical or religious perspective. Sentimentality, too, is evaluated differently as a route to aspect seeing, as opposed to a route to belief in a scientific theory. Gaita points out that while sentimentality is a cause for false propositions in biology, in ethics, sentimentality characterises the very thing that is wrong. In biology the cognitive content of a proposition can be identified independently of the emotions surrounding it. The style of presentation is irrelevant. Our evaluation of an ethical statement, on the other hand, takes account of how we have arrived at it, whether in anger, indifference, or in compassion. Thus, our emotions are not incidental to the status of our ethical judgements.[36]

The same is true of religious reasoning. Emotions play an important role in coming to faith. People often come to God as a result of being moved by a near-death experience, by a powerful novel, by a death, a birth, a meeting that changed their life, by hearing a sermon, by falling in love. Seeing something as a miracle, seeing God in a particular event is also being moved in a particular way. How a person is moved, whether by fear, hate, love, or hope goes to the heart of how we judge her coming to see things differently, whether as a conversion, a delusional state, a mental sickness, or as manipulation. The types of emotions that play a role in one's change of heart are not incidental to its very nature. We think of a preacher who promises hell and damnation, who terrifies her hearers into believing, as manipulating them rather than as converting them. We no longer see fear as a reason for conversion but merely as a cause. Finding God by being brought to find hope, meaning, love, or courage, on the other hand, are ordinarily seen as genuine conversions.

Acknowledging the role of the emotions in reasoning a person to aspect see God, beauty or a certain course of action as the right one does not amount to a non-critical acceptance of all the means of persuasion that are used to convince and convert. The types of distinctions that we make between acceptable and unacceptable means of persuasion or conversion, complex as they are, can be accepted, as they are, and put into use by the philosopher. Using those distinctions as our starting point to an examination of the kinds of reasons that are employed within religious discourse is already delimiting reasons from manipulations. There is no need for an

external criterion for separating reasons from manipulations within religious discourse.

Margaret MacDonald's conception of aesthetic reasoning ties together various features of aesthetic argumentation around a *performative* conception of aesthetic reasoning. Arguments and proofs in aesthetics do not "give general criteria as 'reasons' but 'convey' the work as a pianist might 'show' the value of a sonata by playing it".[37] An argument in aesthetics, according to MacDonald, is a *performance*, which brings it to life; it is not merely a description of its character:

> Criticism does not, and cannot, have the impersonal character and strict rules, applicable independently of time and place, appropriate to science and mathematics. . . . Criticism is, therefore, I suggest, an indefinite set of devices for 'presenting' not 'proving' the merits of works of art. It has none of the stability of logical truth, scientific method, legal and moral law. It varies with time, place and audience, while not being completely subject to these limitations.[38]

Thus, For MacDonald, the tasks of the critic "resemble those of the actor and executant rather than those of the scientist and logician".[39]

Preachers, too, do not ordinarily use deductive or inductive arguments. Like the art critic who re-performs the work of art so that it may come to life in a particular way, the preacher, too, intends to bring various facts or events, past or present, into life so that God may be seen in or through them. The preacher therefore plays a similar role to that of the actor and executant.

Religious reasons and justifications, like ethical and aesthetic reasons and justifications, should not be construed on the model of scientific ones. When they are construed in general and abstract means, they are religiously impotent. An examination of the types of reasons that are ordinarily employed in conversations between theists and atheists shows that religious reasoning, like ethical and aesthetic reasoning, is particularist, and like ethical and aesthetic reasoning, it is directed at inducing sameness of vision. Religious justification is not a mere deduction or induction but a demonstration, a performance.

Miracles

Another way of characterising a performative act through which God is seen is as a miracle. The term "miracle" is applied to any event, whether ordinary or extraordinary through which God is seen. An argument too, may be called a "miracle" when it becomes the vehicle through which God is seen. Thus, the performance of miracles, of demonstrative, transformative acts which are intended to help one see God is the paradigm of religious reasoning.

Taking the performance of miracles as the paradigm of religious reasoning is compatible with the dominant role that the perception of miracles played, and continues to play in people's religious conversions. According to Ramsay MacMullen miracles, healing, and exorcism were the established means of conversion in the ancient world. Conversion by means of

philosophical arguments was the exception rather than the rule.[40]

Miracles were often used to argue for a particular religious point. Jesus performed miracles as a way of reasoning his fellow Jews into seeing his special relationship to God. In Mark 2, we hear of the healing of a paralytic. Upon seeing the paralytic, Jesus said: "Son, your sins are forgiven." The narrative continues:

> Now some of the scribes were sitting there questioning in their hearts, 'Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?' At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, 'Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven' or to say 'Stand up and take your mat and walk?' but so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic—'I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home'. And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!' (Mark 2: 8-12).

In this passage, Jesus used a miracle to demonstrate his special relation to God and his authority to forgive sins. He used a miracle as an argument. Its purpose was to transform his audience's perception of him, to help them see him in a new light: as one whose relation to God is such that he can forgive sins.

We must not be misled into thinking that a miracle is different from any other form of argumentation or reasoning in religion, in putting an end to the disagreement and forcing itself on its perceivers. Like other types of argumentation in religion, a miracle too has to be perceived in a particular way. God has to be seen acting in the event in as much as God has to be seen or heard in the words of the preacher, in her pointing to an unexpected victory, recovery, to the sun, or the rain.

Our inability to deduce the religious from the non-religious is manifested in the multiplicity of reactions to biblical, as well as to non-biblical miracles. We hear of a variety of reactions to Jesus' miracles. In Luke 11, we hear of Jesus casting out demons. While some marvelled, others accused him of casting out demons by the evil power Be-el'-zebul:

> Now he was casting out a demon that was dumb; when the demon had gone out, the dumb man spoke, and the people marvelled. But some of them said, 'He casts out demons by Be-el'-zebul, the prince of demons'; while others, to test him, sought from him a sign from heaven. (Luke 11: 14-16).

The gospel according to John tells us of a variety of reactions to Jesus' healing of the blind man:

> The neighbours and those who had seen ... [the blind man] before as a beggar began to ask 'Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?'

> Some were saying 'It is he.' Others were saying 'No, but it is someone like him.'" (John 9: 8-9). After establishing that it was the blind man who has been healed by Jesus and can now see, the Pharisees, hearing that the healing has taken place on a Sabbath said 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.' But others said 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such sign?' And they were divided. (John 9: 16).

Reasons and demonstrations in religion are surrounded by disagreement, by a variety of responses. What functions as a reason for one, does not function as a reason for another; what moves one into faith does not move the other; what impresses one person as a demonstration, what one person is able to see as revealing of God's presence or very being is not seen as such by another. Where one person sees God another sees a happenstance; where one sees a punishment another sees a misfortune.

The working of miracles with the disagreement and doubt that surround them is the paradigm of reasoning in religion. Like a miracle, an argument in religion is a demonstration, a performance which is designed to bring various facts or events into life in a particular manner, so that God may be seen in or through them, through the performer or through her performance. Like a miracle, an argument is a vehicle through which God may be seen.

Assimilating the giving of a reason for God's existence to the performance of a miracle that is designed to reveal God's existence does not commit us to a contentious conception of God as a super-cause, nor does it commit us to a conception of miracles as violations of the laws of nature. Swinburne's definition of a miracle: "An event of an extraordinary kind brought about by a god and of religious significance"[41] need not be accepted. Such a conception of a miracle obscures what is most important about a miracle, namely, that it is a medium through which God is seen. Any fact or event, of whatever kind: ordinary, or extraordinary, predictable or unpredictable, one that appears to violate the laws of nature, or one that is in complete agreement with our understanding of the laws of nature could become the vehicle through which God is seen, i.e., a miracle.

Being extraordinary, appearing to violate the laws of nature is neither a sufficient condition nor a necessary one for an event to be called a "miracle." Swinburne himself points out that: "If a god intervened in the natural order to make a feather land here rather than there … or to upset a child's box of toys … these events would not naturally be described as miracles."[42] God is not necessarily seen in the inexplicable, in the abnormal and deviant. A baby born with two heads is not ordinarily seen as a miracle. Extraordinary events that serve a positive purpose, too, are not necessarily seen as miracles. The multiplicity of reactions to biblical miracles reveals the fact that extra-ordinariness is not a sufficient condition. The Pharisees did not see God in the healing of the paralytic; the Egyptians did not see the God of Israel in the Plagues. An atheist could always regard an event, which appears to violate the laws of nature as inexplicable, but as revealing of nothing but itself.

It is the seeing of God in an event that leads one to apply the term "miracle" to that event. The religiously sighted is able to see God not merely in the extraordinary and unexpected, but also in the ordinary, in what is

expected, even in the banal. Thus, extra-ordinariness is not a necessary condition either for our application of the term "miracle" to an event. Any vehicle through which God is perceived may be called a miracle. Any object, fact or event may become the vehicle through which God is perceived: whether it is an argument, a frog, a burning bush, or an unexpected healing.

The biblical conception of "miracles" is explicated in the terminology of "signs and wonders."[43] "Signs and wonders" are facts or events through which God is seen. Some such events are extraordinary, while others are completely ordinary. Some such events could be described by the post enlightenment terminology of apparent violations to the laws of nature, while others can be described as the very paradigm of our conception of a law of nature.

The rainbow is described as a *sign* of God's covenant:

> This is the sign of the covenant which I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. (Genesis 9: 12-13).

The believer sees God's covenant with the universe in the rainbow. The rainbow is a sign of God's presence in the world.

The same term, "sign", is used to refer to the Plagues:

> Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Go in to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may show these signs of mine among them, and that you may tell in the hearing of your son and of your son's son how I have made sport of the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them; that you may know that I am the Lord.' (Exodus 10: 1-2).

God is perceived in darkness, in the sickness of the enemy's cattle, in hail and in lice, to mention only few such signs.

In Psalm 107, the Psalmist thanks God for the wonders that God had performed. The list of wonders includes events that appear to violate our conception of the laws of nature but also events that have a great importance to the one who has experienced them, but that appear to fall into the domain of the ordinary rather than the extraordinary. The Psalm mentions: turning rivers into deserts, turning a fruitful land into a salty waste, but also deliverance from hunger and thirst, and deliverance from affliction (Psalm 107: 4-5, 33-34).

Jewish and Christian theologians, too, do not restrict the application of the term "miracle" to that which appears to violate the natural course of events, or the laws of nature.

Nahmanides, one of the most influential rabbinical leaders in 12th century Spain, spoke of both public miracles and of secret miracles, which are hidden in their ordinariness:

> The rewards and punishments of the Torah are all secret miracles, which appear to those who see them as belonging to the normal

> course of the world, although the truth is that they are punishments and rewards for human beings.[44]

According to Nahmanides, everything is a miracle:

> Out of the experience of the great public miracles a person will come to acknowledge the secret miracles, which are the foundation (*yesod*) of the entire Torah. For no one has a portion in the Torah of Moses our master unless he believes that everything that happens to us (*khol devareinu u-miqreinu*), everything, is a miracle. There is nothing natural or ordinary about it …[45]

For Nahmanides, there is no ontological distinction between public and hidden miracles, between the ordinary and the extraordinary. God is in everything, and God may be seen in everything.

Tillich, eight hundred years later wished to do away with the supernatural undercurrents of the term "miracle", and re-emphasise the original biblical sense of miracles as signs through which God is seen, or in his terminology, "sign-events" that produce astonishment:

> Miracles cannot be interpreted in terms of a supernatural interference in natural processes. . . . The supernaturalistic theory of miracles makes God a sorcerer . . . A genuine miracle is first of all an event which is astonishing, unusual, shaking, without contradicting the rational structure of reality. In the second place, it is an event which points to the mystery of being, expressing its relation to us in a definite way. In the third place, it is an occurrence which is received as a sign-event in an ecstatic experience. Only if these three conditions are fulfilled can one speak of a genuine miracle.[46]

People apply the term "miracle" to an unexpected recovery, to a meeting that changed their life, to a "miracle drug" that kills decease or that reduces pain. Any event that impresses one, that moves one, that plays an important role in one's life, whether it is a birth, a death, a recovery, a conversation that changed one's life, a smile or a frown that tilted one's life in a particular direction, any event such as these may become the vehicle through which God is seen acting in one's life, i.e., a miracle.

An attempt to prove God's existence by means of an argument is logically similar to the attempt to perform a miracle. Both attempts are directed at changing one's way of seeing; both are directed at helping one see God. An argument that brings about the dawning of the religious aspect, that becomes the medium through which one sees God may properly be called a "miracle".

Testimony of God's Word, of God's nature and very being, whether of a prophet, a mystic, or an ordinary believer is often rejected. The non-perceiver is often unable to see God by means of a testimony. It is only when the testimony becomes one's own, it is only when the witness and her testimony become the vehicles through which God is seen, that one can be said to trust it, and believe.

Philosophers of religion often wish to perform miracles. They often wish to provide the atheist with reasons for believing. The argument from religious experience is one such attempt. The means that it employs, however, are such that its success would be nothing short of a miracle.[47]

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NOTES

1. Keith Yandell, *Christianity and Philosophy*, (Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1984), 11.
2. Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* Revised Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 254.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 274.
5. Ibid. 272. My italics.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., 271
8. Ibid., 274.
9. Ibid.
10. Swinburne sometimes speaks of a subject's *right* to trust her own perceptions, e.g., when stating that "One who has had a religious experience apparently of God has, by the Principle of Credulity, good reason for believing that there is a God—other things being equal..."(Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God* Revised Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 274). Other times, he speaks of an epistemic *duty* to trust one's own experience, e.g., when stating that "in the absence of special considerations, all religious experiences ought to be taken by their subjects as genuine, and hence as substantial grounds for belief in the existence of their apparent object..."(Richard Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, Revised Edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 254).
11. I identify the atheist with the one who does not see God in the world, and the believer with the mystic who sees God, whether in a mystical experience, or in the more ordinary experience of seeing God in the beauty of the universe.
12. I use the following abbreviations within the text: PI: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 3rd edition, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co. Inc., 1958); RPP: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, eds. G. H. von Wright and Heikki Nyman trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980); Z: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Zettel*, 2nd edition eds. G. E. M. Anscombe and G.H. von Wright trans. G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1998).
13. "The flashing of an aspect on us seems half visual experience, half thought." (PI, p. 197).
14. "Is this a special sort of seeing? Is it a case of both seeing and thinking? or an amalgam of the two, as I should almost like to say?" (PI, p. 197).
15. "Should I say that it is a phenomenon between seeing and thinking? No; but a concept that lies between that of seeing and thinking, that is, which bears a resemblance to both" (RPP II, 462).
16. For a helpful analysis of aspect perception and its relation to ordinary seeing see Malcolm Budd, "Wittgenstein On Seeing Aspects" *Mind* 96 (1987):1-17.

17. Stephen Mulhall, *On Being in the World*, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990),
especially chapter 5.
18. Baz thinks that aspect dawning is at the center of Wittgenstein's concern with aspects and denies that continuous seeing may be a case of aspect seeing. However, like Mulhall, Baz thinks that seeing aspects extends beyond pictures. (Avner Baz, "What's the Point of Seeing Aspects?" in *Philosophical Investigations* 23/2 (April 2000), 97-121); Paul Johnston, on the other hand, thinks that the seeing of aspects has mostly to do with people, words, and pictures. (Paul Johnston, *Wittgenstein: Rethinking the Inner* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), especially chapter 2, and the appendix); McFee agrees that seeing-as has to do with pictures but thinks that it has to do solely with ambiguous pictures. (Graham McFee, "Wittgenstein on Art and Aspects" in *Philosophical Investigations* 22/3 (July 1999), 262-284).
19. Rush Rhees, *Without Answers*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969); Raimond Gaita, "The Personal in Ethics" in *Wittgenstein: Attention to Particulars*, D. Z. Phillips and Peter Winch eds., (London: Macmillan Press, 1989), 124-150.
20. Rhees, *Without Answers*, 95-96.
21. Gaita, "The Personal in Ethics," 129.
22. Ibid.
23. The Hebrew uses 'understood'; the Revised Standard Version translates it as 'perceived'. For obvious reasons, I am following the Hebrew.
24. The italics are mine.
25. According to Swinburne, "negative 'seemings' on empirical matters give much shakier support to claims about how things are not than do positive 'seemings' to how things are." (Richard Swinburne, "Does Theism Need a Theodicy?" in *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 18 (1988), 294 n.). Thus, everything else being equal, we are to give epistemic preference to positive perceptions over negative ones. As a way of resolving ethical, aesthetic and religious disagreements this is clearly unpersuasive.
26. Frank Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts" in *Philosophy of Art and Aesthetics from Plato to Wittgenstein*, Frank A. Tillman and Steven M. Cahn eds. (New York: Evanston and London: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969), 589-590.
27. Ibid. 591.
28. Jonathan Dancy, *Moral Reasons*, (Oxford UK and Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1993), 113.
29. Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts," 591.
30. Ibid., 589-590.
31. Ibid. 586
32. Arnold Isenberg, "Critical Communication" in *Aesthetics and Language*, William Elton ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967), 131-146.
33. Ibid., 142.
34. Ibid., 143. See also Stuart Hampshire in *Aesthetics and Language*. William Elton ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967); Colin Lyas, "The Evaluation of Art" in *Philosophical Aesthetics*, Oswald Hanfling ed. (Cambridge and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers in Association with the Open University Press, 1992), 349-380.
35. Gaita, "The Personal in Ethics," 136-137.
36. Ibid. 137-138.
37. Margaret MacDonald, "Some Distinctive Features of Arguments Used in Criticism of the Arts" in *Aesthetics and Language*. William Elton ed., (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1967),129.
38. Ibid.

39. Ibid., 127.

40. Ramsay MacMullen *Christianizing the Roman Empire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984), 25-42.

41. Richard Swinburne ed., *Miracles* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company and London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 2.

42. Ibid. 6.

43. The Hebrew is: "*Otot U Moftim*"; The Greek: "*semeia kai terata*".

44. Nahmanides, *Commentary on the Torah*, ed. C B. Chavel (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1959-1963), Exodus 6:2 - II, 303; See also David Novak, *The Theology of Nahmanides Systematically Presented*, Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1992), 63.

45. Nahmanides, *Commentary on the Torah*, ed. C B. Chavel (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1959-1963), Exodus 13:16 - I, 346-347; See also David Novak, *The Theology of Nahmanides Systematically Presented*, Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1992), 70-71.

46. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 117-118.

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